Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

2 June 2014

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Meeting of Experts
Geneva, 4-8 August 2014
Item 8 of the provisional agenda
Biennial item: how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties

International organization that may be involved in the provision of and coordination of assistance relevant to Article VII

Submitted by the Implementation Support Unit

Summary

The Seventh Review Conference decided that in 2014 and 2015 States Parties will consider how to strengthen implementation of Article VII, including consideration of detailed procedures and mechanisms for the provision of assistance and cooperation by States Parties. At the request of the Chairman, the Implementation Support Unit has updated past background information papers on capacities in international organizations which might be relevant.

Introduction

1. If a State Party requests assistance under Article VII, several different international organizations might be involved in either assisting in, or coordinating, response efforts.

2. This background paper focuses on international organizations with an operational response capacity. It compiles information provided for this paper by international organizations with capacity that might be relevant to Article VII. Additional information from other international organizations is still pending and will be included in addenda to this document. In cases where an organization has yet to respond to requests for information from the ISU, the Unit has used information from their websites to update data previously made available to States Parties.

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3. This background paper updates information provided in background papers prepared for meetings in 2004[1] and 2010.[2]

Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

***FAO*–OIE–WHO Global *Early Warning* System (GLEWS)[3]**

4. WS is a joint system that adds value by combining and coordinating the alert and disease intelligence mechanisms of OIE, FAO and WHO. It assists in prediction, prevention and control of animal disease threats, including zoonoses, through sharing of information, epidemiological analysis and joint risk assessment.

5. WS builds on the alert mechanisms of the different organizations, enhancing early warning capacity. Improved sharing of information on disease alerts helps to avoid duplication of effort. It also helps to combine and coordinate the processes used to confirm the nature of an outbreak. For zoonotic events, animal outbreaks can provide early warning of an impending human outbreak and enable preventive action to be taken. Similarly, there may be cases where human surveillance is more sensitive and provides indicators of an animal outbreak to follow.

FAO- plant pests and plant diseases[4]

6. FAO helps track and prevent plant pests and diseases, including through:

- the FAO Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) Plant Protection branch – which monitors and serves as an early-warning system for plant pests and plant diseases; and5
- the FAO Food Chain Crisis- Emergency Management Unit (FCC-EMU) Plant Protection - which provides rapid response capabilities.6

FAO- transboundary animal diseases[7]

7. The FAO maintains three programs on animal diseases:

- the FAO Emergency Prevention System (EMPRES) Animal Health branch - which monitors and serves as an early-warning system for animal diseases.[8]
- the Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD) - which organizes the delivery of veterinary assistance to FAO member countries grappling with transboundary animal disease crises; and[9]

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[1] BWC/MSP/2004/MX/INF.1 and BWC/MSP/2004/MX/INF.2.

[2] BWC/MSP/2010/MX/INF.2.

[3] Based upon information found by the ISU at: http://www.glews.net.

[4] upon information found by the ISU at: http://www.fao.org/emergencies/emergency-types/plant-pests-and-diseases/en/.

[5] Based upon information found by the ISU at: http://www.fao.org/foodchain/empres-prevention-and-early-warning/en/.

[6] Based upon information found by the ISU at: http://www.fao.org/foodchain/fcc-response/en/.

[7] Based upon information found by the ISU at: http://www.fao.org/emergencies/emergency-types/transboundary-animal-diseases/en/.

[8] Based upon information found by the ISU at: http://www.fao.org/foodchain/empres-prevention-and-early-warning/en/.

[9] Based upon information found by the ISU at: http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/empres/ah1n1/Ectad.html.

- the ECTAD "operational arm", Crisis Management Centre- Animal Health – which is a FAO rapid response unit, and operates in partnership with OIE and WHO, amongst others.[10]

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)[11]

8. Responding to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) events in armed conflicts and other situations of violence is within the mandate of the ICRC and an obligation deriving from its duty of care. The response is still under development, and refers to the management of risks from CBRN events, which may comprise prevention, preparation and reaction. It also includes making representations to authorities and communication regarding the international legal obligations of one or more parties to a conflict. In addition, the ICRC response to CBRN events will take into account policies, capacities and perceptions of governments, authorities (civil and military) and civil society as well as of international organizations and the other components of the Movement.

9. The three key objectives of any response by the ICRC to a CBRN event are, in order of priority, to:

(a) minimize risks to the health, safety and security of persons to whom the ICRC has a duty of care;

(b) ensure the integrity of the organization and continuation of its activities;

(c) provide assistance to affected people, as possible.

10. It is important to note that CBRN operational response within ICRC is recent and still developing, currently only the first of three objectives is achieved, while the second is developing, and the third planed.

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

Investigation of alleged use

11. In accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW would be involved in investigations of alleged use of chemical weapons or of riot control agents used as a method of warfare. These investigations are initiated pursuant to Articles IX on Consultations, Cooperation and Fact-Finding or Article X on Assistance and Protection against Chemical Weapons of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

12. The OPCW inspection team would be dispatched at the earliest opportunity after the receipt of a request for an investigation of alleged use. In accordance with the Convention, the inspection team would have the right of access to any and all areas which could be affected by the alleged use of chemical weapons, including hospitals, refugee camps and other locations, as well as the right to collect samples, including toxic chemicals, munitions and devices, remnants of munitions and devices, environmental samples (such as air, soil, vegetation, water, snow, etc.) and biomedical samples from human or animal sources (such as blood, urine, tissue etc.). The situation reports from the team would indicate any urgent need for assistance and any other relevant information for the Director-General.

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[10] Based upon information found by the ISU at: http://www.fao.org/emergencies/how-we-work/prepare-and-respond/cmc-animal-health/en/.
Based upon information found by the Implementation Support Unit at:
http://www.fao.org/ag/againfo/programmes/en/empres/ah1n1/Ectad.html

[11] Information provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

13. The final report to the DG would summarize the factual findings of the inspection, particularly with regard to the alleged use cited in the request. In addition, a report of an investigation of an alleged use will include a description of the investigation process

Assistance and coordination – deployment phase

14. The Assistance and Protection Branch (APB) develops and maintains a state of readiness for the OPCW to respond timely, effectively and adequately to requests for assistance under Article X of the Chemical Weapons Convention by:

(a) Mobilizing international mechanisms and coordinating international response to requests for assistance;

(b) Building capacity in the OPCW to manage assistance from the international community and;

(c) Coordinating and delivering assistance to the requesting State Party.

Assistance Assessment

15. The main objective of an APB assessment team is to conduct an on-site survey of the assistance needs of the Requesting State Party and to collect information on the assistance activities already initiated at the local and national level as well as appeals for assistance launched to United Nations organizations and agencies, other IOs and NGOs. Furthermore the team will seek to acquire information on the national emergency mechanisms, structures and tools to mitigate the consequences of the alleged use of CW as well as details regarding international assistance teams, United Nations organizations and agencies, other IOs and NGOs already operating in the country

Assistance Coordination

16. The APB team will also have the expertise to support any national or local Emergency Management Authority in the coordination and management of an assistance operation and in the on-site coordination process of the international assistance assets. This may entail assisting the Emergency Management Authority in the establishment of co-ordination platforms like a Reception Centre or an On-site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) if such emergency management structures are not already in place.

Assistance and coordination – Ongoing activities

17. The responsibilities of the branch include:

(a) evaluation of the constraints of an international mechanism for the provision of assistance in the case of use or threat of use of chemical weapons, and advising States Parties and the Organization;

(b) maintenance of the annual work plan for the implementation of activities relating to assistance and protection;

(c) maintenance and monitoring of the capacity within the OPCW to manage a call for assistance;

(d) conduct of capacity building projects with the aim to increase effectiveness of emergency response to incidents involving chemical weapons or the misuse of toxic industrial chemicals;

(e) conduct of capacity building projects to ensure that the States Parties have adequate capacity to respond to a request for assistance from the Organisation;

(f) establishment, verification and maintenance of standard operating procedures enabling the Organisation to respond in a timely and effective to a request for assistance;

(g) organization of OPCW delivery of assistance exercises; and

(h) cooperation with other relevant international organizations such as United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, the World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, etc., to ensure coherence of any joint plans for assistance.

World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE)[12]

18. The OIE has the mandate to improve animal health worldwide and plays a key role at the intergovernmental level in mitigating risks from animal diseases. OIE is the intergovernmental body that has the responsibility for transparency of the global animal disease situation and for setting the International Standards for detection and control of important animal diseases, including zoonoses.

19. If correctly implemented, OIE guidelines and recommendations can do a lot to increase the ability of OIE Member Countries and the international community to protect themselves against the threat of a bioterrorist incident. However, such protection depends on the diligence with which Member Countries follow the existing guidelines and recommendations. To mitigate the risk and impact from natural, accidental or deliberate introduction of animal diseases the capacity to implement existing methods of prevention, early disease detection, rapid response, and containment needs to be extended at national and international levels.

20. OIE and its partners are committed to strengthening cooperation at the international, regional, and national levels in terms of the 'one health' initiative. The mechanisms for detecting and responding to outbreaks of disease in animals are the same whether the origin of the outbreak is a natural event, an accidental release or a deliberate release. The threat from animal diseases being used as bioweapons is best mitigated by strengthening existing mechanisms for animal disease detection and control. OIE promotes the strengthening of veterinary services worldwide so that Members are better able to comply with the existing international standards, have effective resources and legislation, and that they are governed properly. The OIE shares a common interest with its international partners in reducing biological threats from animal diseases, including zoonoses.

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[12] Information provided by International Committee of the Red Cross.